

Message Text

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46

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 OPR-02 SY-05 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 MC-02 ACDA-05 /082 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1839

INFO USCINCSO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 4646

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, AR

SUBJECT: SITREP 19: LABOR-POLITICAL CONFRONTATION WITH GOVERNMENT

1. CABINET ANNOUNCED JULY 11 IS CLEARLY EFFORT TO SAVE SOMETHING BY GIVING HALF A LOAF. CARLOS VILLONE, A CLOSE LOPEZ REGA SUPPORTER, TAKES OVER FOR HIS MENTOR AT SOCIAL WELFARE. JULIO GONZALEZ BECOMES PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY. HE TOO IS LOPEZREGISTA (AND A BITTER ANTI-SEMITES). MOST OBJECTIONABLE OF ALL TO LABOR AND TO MOST ANTI-LOPEZ REGA FORCES, HOWEVER, IS CONTINUED PRESENCE OF CELESTINO RODRIGO AS ECON MINISTER. CGT IS ALREADY TALKING ABOUT A 72-HOUR GENERAL STRIKE TO FORCE HIM OUT.

2. WHETHER OR NOT STRIKE MOVEMENT GATHERS STEAM, IT IS CLEAR THAT CRISIS WHICH ERUPTED TWO WEEKS AGO HAS NOT BEEN RESOLVED. LOPEZ REGA HAS RESIGNED BOTH OFFICIAL POSITIONS AND APPARENTLY (THOUGH IT IS NOT YET CONFIRMED) WILL ALSO GIVE UP JOB AS PERSONAL SECRETARY. ACCORDING TO PRESS, HE IS MOVING OUT OF PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE
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AT OLIVOS AND INTO PERON'S OLD HOUSE IN NEARBY VICENTE

LOPEZ. ONE REPORT EVEN INDICATES HE WILL BE DEPARTING FOR VACATION IN EUROPE DURING NEXT FEW HOURS. ON SURFACE, THEN, HE HAS BEEN DEFEATED. FEW DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT HE WILL TRY TO DIRECT GOVERNMENT (AND MRS. PERON) FROM BEHIND THE SCENES, AND SO LONG AS HE HAS HIS MEN IN GOVERNMENT HE HAS SOME CHANCE OF DOING SO.

3. HIS OPPONENTS ARE PERFECTLY AWARE OF THIS AND INTEND TO KEEP UP PRESSURES WITH IDEA OF COMPLETE HOUSECLEANING. LOPEZ REGA'S OSTENSIBLE DEFENESTRATION, NONETHELESS, HAS DIMINISHED THE MOMENTUM SOMEWHAT AND IT COULD BE SOME TIME BEFORE IT BUILDS UP TO A HEAD AGAIN. HENCE, DRIVE TO OUSST ALL HIS SUPPORTERS AND TOTALLY DENY HIM LEVERS OF POWER COULD GO ON OVER PERIOD OF WEEKS. THIS IS UNFORTUNATE, FOR IT MEANS THAT CONTINUED POLITICAL TURMOIL LIKELY TO DETRACT ATTENTION FROM INCREASINGLY CRITICAL ECONOMIC SITUATION. IN THIS VEIN, IT UNFORTUNATE TOO THAT GOA HAS LEFT RODRIGO IN PLACE. ITS CHANCES OF SAVING PARTS OF HIS ECONOMIC PROGRAM WOULD HAVE BEEN GREATER HAD A NEW FACE BEEN PUT IN CHARGE OF IMPLEMENTATION--I.E. RODRIGO PLAN WITHOUT RODRIGO. AS IT IS, THOSE PROSPECTS ARE NOT GREAT.

4. WHILE PRINCIPAL EFFORTS OF OPPONENTS LIKELY TO BE FOCUSED ON CABINET (AND POSSIBLY ON REMOVING LASTIRI FROM CHAMBER PRESIDENCY), SOME ACTIVITIES MAY ALSO BE EXPECTED IN THE PERONIST PARTY. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FRM EXCELLENT SOURCE THAT MOVE IS AFOOT TO CONVENE A PARTY CONGRESS AND ELECT NEW OFFICERS--I.E. THUS OUSTING MRS. PERON AND LASTIRI FROM TOP JOBS. THIS WILL BE DIFFICULT.

5. WITH RESPECT TO PARTY, MRS. PERON AND LASTIRI MAY NOW REGRET THAT THEY DID NOT MOVE AHEAD WITH ITS RE-ORGANIZATION. WHEN CRISIS CAME, THEY IN EFFECT HAD NO PARTY ORGANIZATION TO TURN TO. THERE IS REALLY VERY LITTLE IN WAY OF HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE BELOW THE TOP, AND THERE SECOND VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY GENERAL AND SEVERAL COUNSELORS HAD RESIGNED AND NOT BEEN REPLACED. THUS, WHEN LASTIRI CALLED MEETING CONFIDENTIAL

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OF SUPERIOR COUNCIL IN EFFORT TO RALLY SUPPORT, HE FOUND HIMSELF TALKING MOSTLY TO EMPTY CHAIRS.

6. NEW SUCCESSION LAW DID PASS CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES ON JULY 11 DESPITE EFFORTS OF LASTIRI AND PEDRINI (PRESIDENT OF FREJULI BLOC IN CHAMBER) TO HEAD IT OFF.

7. GIVEN THAT POLITICAL INFIGHTING MAY BE DRAWN OUT

OVER PERIOD OF TIME, WE ARE TERMINATING SITREPS, AT LEAST
FOR THE MOMENT, AND WILL REPORT BY REGULAR CABLES.
HILL

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